

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 845

By Fraley

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of James “Jimmy” Bedford of Lynchburg.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of James “Jimmy” Bedford; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bedford was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, born at his parent’s home in Franklin County on January 30, 1940, James “Jimmy” Bedford grew up on the family farm just north of Lynchburg; after graduating from Moore County High School, Mr. Bedford enrolled at Tennessee Technological University, where he met his future wife, Emily Gregory; and

WHEREAS, in 1968, Jimmy Bedford returned to Lynchburg to commence his distinguished career at the oldest registered distillery in the United States, the renowned Jack Daniel Distillery; endeavoring to master his trade from the ground floor, Mr. Bedford poured his heart and soul into his work, laboring with acumen and alacrity in the yeasting, fermenting, milling, and distillation areas and earning the respect of his peers and superiors alike for the exemplary quality of his work; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bedford’s tireless efforts and unsurpassed integrity did not go unnoticed, and, in 1988, he became only the sixth Master Distiller in the history of the company, in which position he ably served for twenty years until his retirement; and

WHEREAS, instrumental in promoting the brand he loved, Jimmy Bedford served with distinction as the ambassador for the distillery, traveling around the world and conversing with consumers, distributors, retailers, and the media about the distillery and the process of making the product for which he was responsible; and

WHEREAS, with Mr. Bedford at the helm, Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey became the best selling single label in the world, with distribution increasing to more than 130 countries; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bedford was revered around the globe as the leader and public face of an American icon, and, because of his integral role in taking this product to the greatest heights and serving as a pioneer in his trade, Jimmy Bedford was honored in 2007 with the Icons of Whiskey Lifetime Achievement Award in London by *Whiskey Magazine*; and

WHEREAS, subsequent to his retirement in March of 2008, Mr. Bedford devoted his time to his family, friends, and farm and lent his tremendous abilities and resources to a variety of organizations and causes, including Ducks Unlimited, the Wild Turkey Federation, muscular dystrophy research, the American Red Cross, Sturgis Kids and Chrome, the Sturgis Mayor's Ride to benefit the Sturgis Fire Department, Tennessee Technological University, and the Moore County Election Commission; and

WHEREAS, a capable leader who embodied the best of his community, Jimmy Bedford organized the Moore County, Tennessee, County Line Water District in 1969; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to honors and accolades, Mr. Bedford was awarded the Tennessee Technological University Distinguished Alumni Award in 2001 for displaying unflagging dedication to his beloved alma mater; and

WHEREAS, Jimmy Bedford was an active and devout member of the First United Methodist Church in Lynchburg, where he faithfully served his Lord for many years; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bedford was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Jimmy Bedford is survived by his loving wife, Emily Gregory Bedford; his daughter and son-in-law, Alice and Edsel Fleming; his brother and sister-in-law, Bill and Sandra Bedford; his sister and brother-in-law, Sue and Carlton Galbreath; his grandson, Wyatt Bedford Fleming; his nieces, nephews, and their spouses, Melissa and Scott Wright, Phillip and Beth Bennett, Myron Bennett, Susan and Clark Simpson, Michelle and Monte Gaw, James William and Holly Bedford, and LeEllen and Chad Carter; and a host of friends, family, and loved ones; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bedford leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this master distiller and exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of James "Jimmy" Bedford, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mr. Bedford.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.